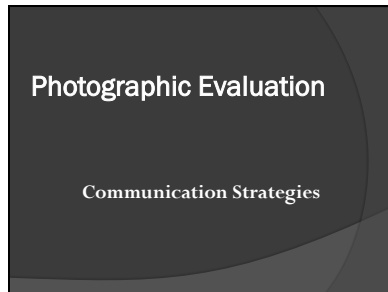




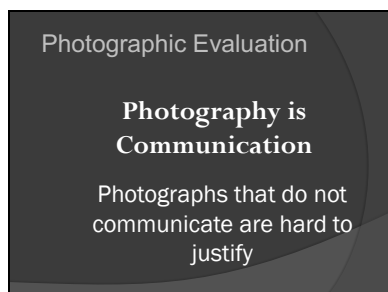
## Slide 1



We all look at photographs every day, either consciously by determined action or subconsciously as we read newspapers, magazines or periodicals or when we watch television or go to a movie.

Whenever we see a photograph we react in some way and consciously or subconsciously interpret or evaluate the photographs we see in order to 'read' them and understand their message.

## Slide 2



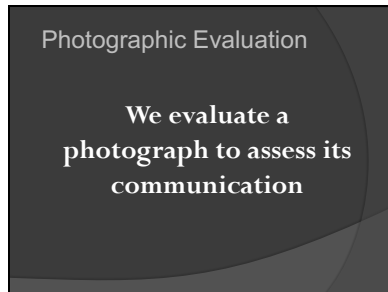
Photographs are about visual communication. The process of the photographer visually communicating their message to the viewer.

The communication can be a narrative or the invocation of a mood or feeling.

If a photograph does not communicate anything, it is difficult to know why it exists.



## Slide 3



The purpose of evaluating our photographs is to assess their ability to communicate the message we are intending to convey.

## Slide 4



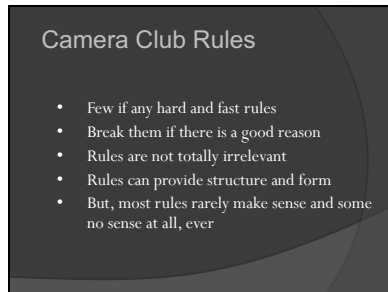
If you have been involved in traditional camera clubs for any length of time you would have come across some arbitrary rules and may have experienced the competition judging process.

Photographic evaluation is a far different concept.

To make this distinction clear let's briefly consider rules, their application and their lack of relevance to the creative evaluation process.



## Slide 5

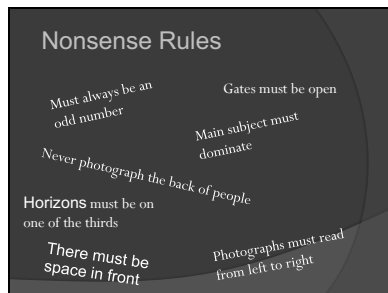


Because of the subjectivity of photography there are few if any relevant hard and fast rules. If there is a good and obvious reason any rule can be broken or totally ignored.

Rules are not totally irrelevant and should not be completely overlooked.

Rules can provide structure and form to a composition. But, some rules rarely make sense and some no sense at all under any condition.

## Slide 6



Many of these rules have been developed specifically by the camera club movement, primarily to give judges a means for offering a seemingly objective critique.

These rules have no relevance in art or art evaluation nor in the world of creative photography where communication is paramount and subjectivity abounds. Before we explore creative photographic evaluation let's set some bench marks by considering a couple of examples.



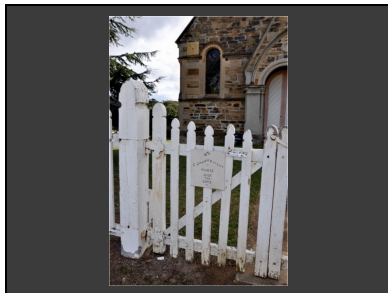
## Slide 7



What is the subject of this image? What messages can be seen? What subject matter has been used to illustrate the subject?

Avoid the obvious camera club assessment about the placement of the man and arguments about space in front.

## Slide 8

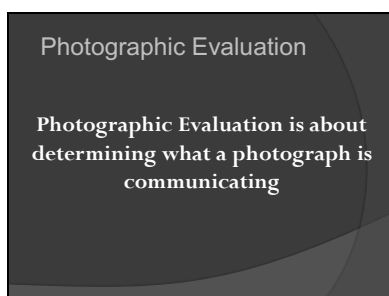


The subject of this photograph is obedience.

The closed gate demonstrates the obedience of the words on the sign attached to the gate.

The camera club rule about gates should be open is totally irrelevant.

## Slide 9

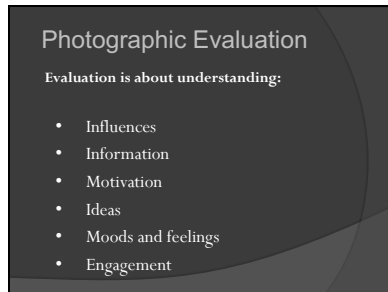


Photography is communication. It is about communicating your message visually.

Photographic evaluation is about understanding what a photograph is communicating and how effectively it does so. It is about understanding the photographer's idea.



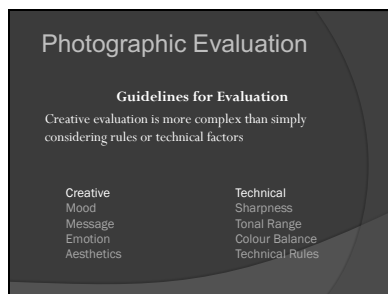
## Slide 10



Photographic evaluation is not about rules it is about reviewing and assessing subjective message factors of the image such as:

- Influences
- Information
- Motivation
- Ideas
- Moods and feelings
- Engagement

## Slide 11

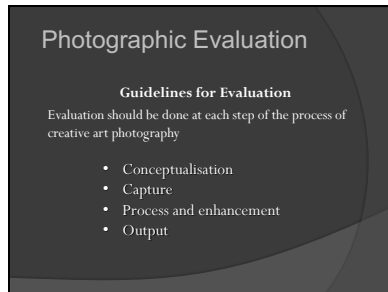


Creative evaluation is a much more complex process than the simple technical assessment against a set of arbitrary camera club rules.

Creative evaluation is the deeper look behind what is seen on the surface of the photograph, to find the meaning and the idea that gave rise to its creation. It is the assessment of how well the photograph achieves its objective of visually communicating an idea from photographer to viewer.



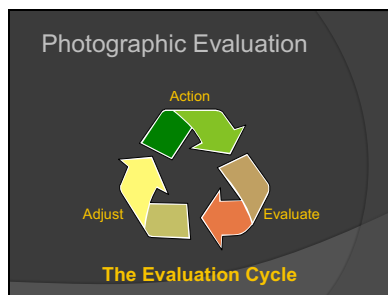
## Slide 12



All evaluation should be done in consideration of and during each step of the process of creative art photography.

- Conceptualisation – choices like message, subject matter, arrangement, aesthetic
- Capture – choices like viewpoint, lens, aperture, shutter speed
- Process and enhancement – choice of tools and processes
- Output – print, projection, web, face book, printed book, audio visual

## Slide 13

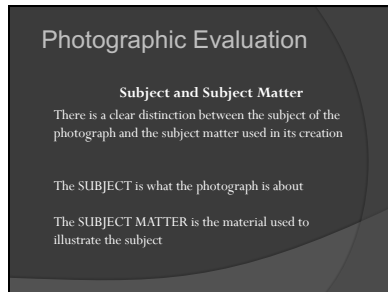


Appraising photographs either formally or informally is a most beneficial process that makes us think constructively about pictures and helps develop our skills.

Appraisal is a circular process in which we take an action in regard to each step of the image making process, appraise that action to see how effective it is in respect to our objective and then make an adjustment if required.



## Slide 14

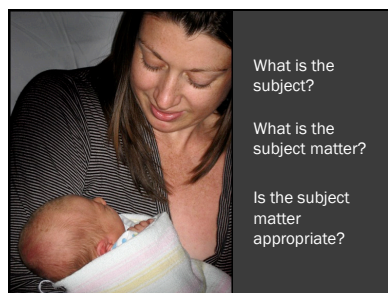


There is a clear distinction between the subject of the photograph and the subject matter used in its creation. The subject is what the photograph is about – its message or what it is communicating.

The subject matter is the material included in the photograph to illustrate the subject and transmit the message.

When evaluating photographs it is important to understand this and to look for the subject of the image and how appropriate the subject matter is and how well it illustrates the subject.

## Slide 15



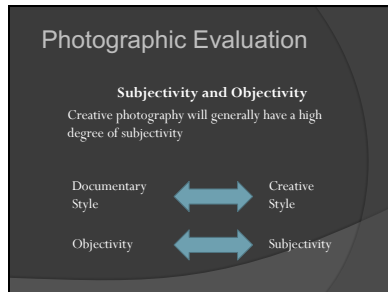
What is the subject of this photograph?

What subject matter has been used to illustrate the subject and communicate the message?

How appropriate is the subject matter?



## Slide 16



When used creatively and artistically as a means of communication, photography is highly subjective. What is photographed and how it is photographed is very much in the eye of the beholder.

In any given situation creative photographers will come up with a range of results that reflect their personal style and outlook. Each will interpret the situation differently and all will create an image that has a message relating the subject that expresses their idea or thoughts about the subject. When used mechanically to record the world, photography becomes quite objective. In this situation it is likely that a number of photographers will produce very similar results when presented with the same subject.

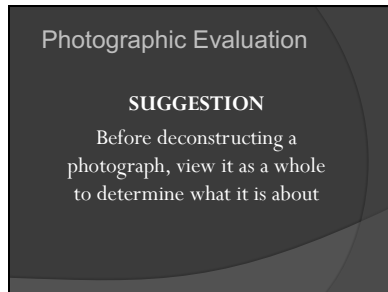
Results that are most likely to be substantially more technical and less interpretive.

As we move from a documentary style to a creative style we move from objectivity towards subjectivity and vice versa.





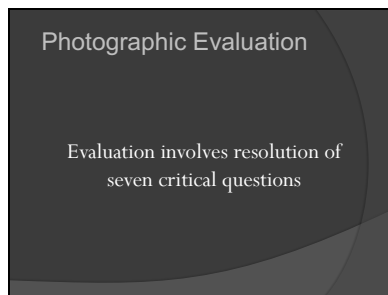
## Slide 17



It is important to appreciate the whole photograph to determine what the photographer is communicating before dissecting it into its component parts.

This allows us to see what the message is and how well it is communicated as the prime objective for evaluating the photograph.

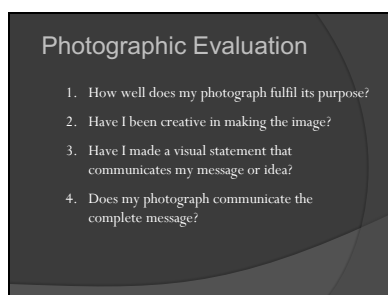
## Slide 18



The process of performing photographic evaluation involves consideration of important criteria which can be done by resolving seven critical questions.

The seven critical questions are as shown on the following two slides.

## Slide 19

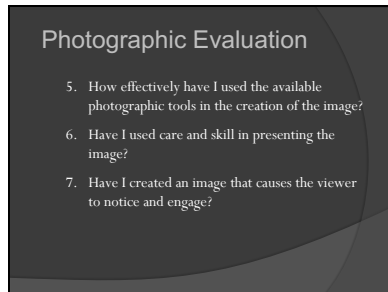


The seven questions are

- How well does the photograph fulfil its purpose?
- Have I been creative in making the image?
- Have I made a visual statement that communicates my message or idea?
- Does the photograph communicate the complete message?

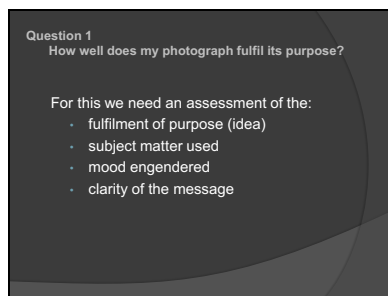


## Slide 20



- How effectively have I used the available photographic tools in the creation of the image?
- Have I used care and skill in presenting the image?
- Have I created an image that forces the viewer to notice and engage with it?

## Slide 21



In reality, with modern photographic equipment, processes and techniques all photographs should surely be successful, at the very least in a technical sense.

The key to how successful they really are depends solely on how well the picture communicates and fulfils its purpose.

This can be assessed by evaluating:

- Expression of the idea that gave rise to the photograph
- The subject matter used and its suitability
- The moods and feelings engendered
- The clarity of the communication



## Slide 22



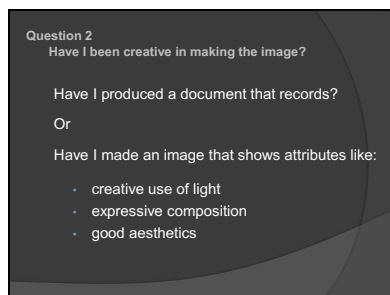
What is the idea or subject of this image?

What subject matter has been used?

What mood does it have?

How clear is the message?

## Slide 23



Do my choices and application make the image more effective in its ability to creatively communicate or have I simply used the camera to record what the lens 'sees'.

The difference is between taking photographs that record and making photographs that influence and inform.

## Slide 24

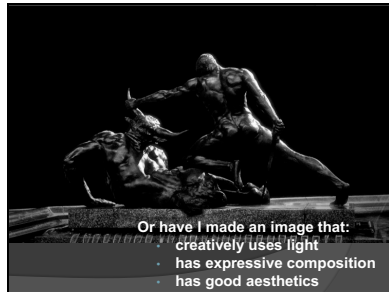


We have the choice of applying a documentary style that records. Letting the camera to much of the work by copying what is before it.

However, we can still be creative when applying the documentary style. We can still ensure effective use of light and strong aesthetics are in play.



## Slide 25

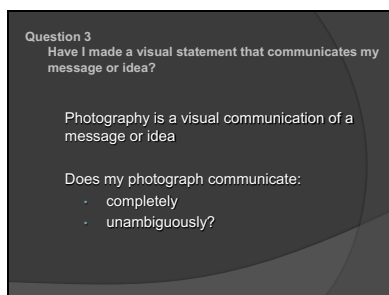


Or have I been more creative to make my message clearer by using techniques that strengthen the communication of my idea.

To what extent have I:

- Used light creatively
- Applied sound compositional concepts to include what is needed and to exclude what is not needed, in a balanced arrangement that has a good aesthetic?

## Slide 26



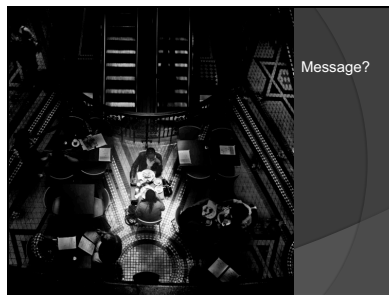
The prime purpose of a creative photograph is to convey a communication from the photographer to the viewer, the transfer of an idea, a story, an emotion or a feeling.

A photograph that does not communicate has no valid reason to exist as a fine art or creative photograph.

In evaluating the communicative aspects of the image we must assess the clarity of the communication and how well the photographer has been able to convey their message visually through the image. We must look deeply



## Slide 27



into the image to understand the photographer's message and not just simply brush over the surface.

What message can we see in this image?

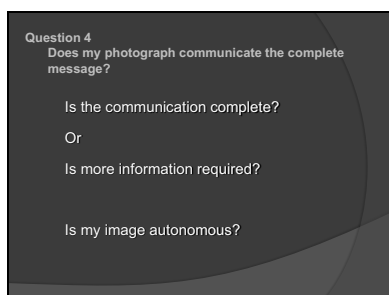
Is the message clear?

Are there any improvements I can make to clarify the message?

What is the mood of the image?

Is the mood appropriate for the message?

## Slide 28

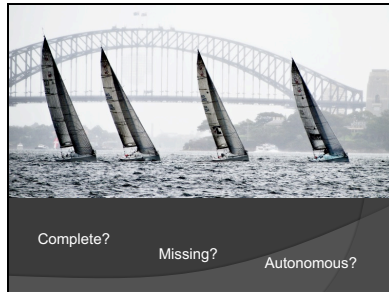


In general most images are presented as a single photograph and so they must be able to satisfy all criteria and to communicate on their own.

The images must send the complete message to the viewer without any other supporting information as there is generally no opportunity to provide such information. Is the image autonomous?



### Slide 29



What message do we see in this image?

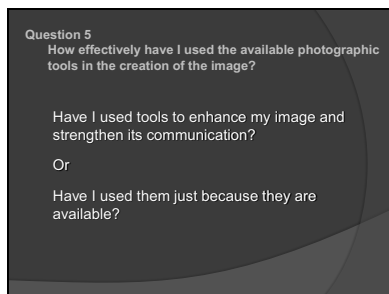
Is the subject matter appropriate?

Should there be additional subject matter?

Is there subject matter that could be eliminated?

Is the image autonomous?

### Slide 30



Today there are far more photographic tools available than at any other time in the history of photography. Not only are more tools available they are generally much easier to use and master.

These tools give us the means to concentrate on the artistic and creative instead of the purely technical – we no longer need to worry if the picture will ‘come out’ as we have instant results.



## Slide 31



Sepia tones and grain effects have been applied to this image.

Does this treatment enhance the idea expressed and the message in the image?

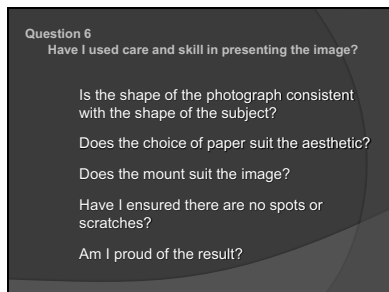
## Slide 32



This image has had some Photoshop filters applied.

Do they enhance the image and strengthen the communication or do we get the impression that they were applied because they were available?

## Slide 33



Many of the photographs you see are presented in a shape and proportion that is consistent with shape of the camera's sensor or the shape of the printing paper as it comes out of the box, with little or no thought about the shape of the subject matter. This can lead to the photograph containing subject matter that is



distracting or does not add to the message of the image. Ideally the final shape of the photograph should match the shape of the subject matter and its arrangement. The shape of the final image can also influence the mood of the photograph. A wide panoramic landscape can create a peaceful or serene mood while a vertical format of the same scene would present as dynamic and strong.

Have I chosen a paper surface that matches the mood and subject? Is the mount suitable? Is the final print free of spots or scratches?

In short, am I proud of the photograph?

### Slide 34



A wide subject with wide subject matter demands a wide shape as shown in this image. Such shape treatment can eliminate unwanted subject matter and enhance the mood.



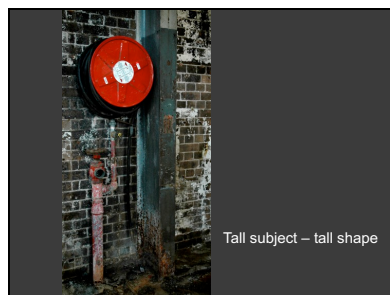


## Slide 35



A wide subject with wide subject matter demands a wide shape as shown in this image. In this image the power of the fence is enhanced by the shape of the photograph while maintaining enough of the subject matter in the background to show the contrast in the message between the well maintained fence and the almost derelict buildings.

## Slide 36



A tall subject with tall subject matter demands a tall shape as shown in this image. Confining the image to a tallish vertical format enhances the subject and removes a lot of clutter.



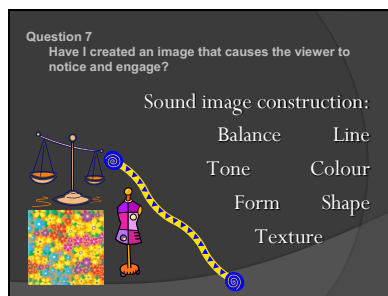
**Slide 37**



The choice of a mount can be a most important step in the production process.  
Have I chosen the right colour?  
Is the size of the mount sufficiently large to suit the size of the print?

The mount cannot add to the message or idea in the photograph but a badly constructed mount can detract.

**Slide 38**

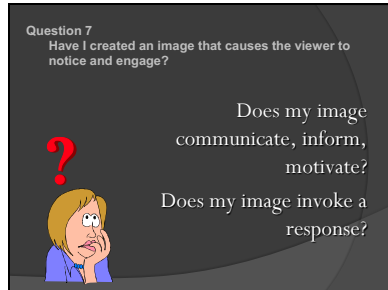


When evaluating your image look for elements of visual communication in the composition that give rise to sound image construction – balance, line, the use of tone, colour palette, form, shape, texture and presentation to name just a few.

Effective composition and presentation are elements that will help engage the viewer.



## Slide 39



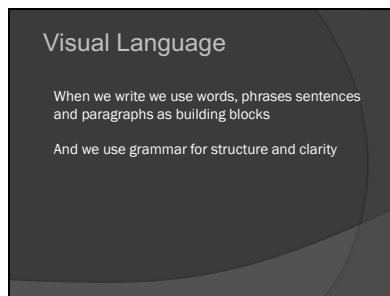
For visual communication to take place it is necessary that we create an image that causes the viewer to look and engage with the message; that is a photograph that obtains some kind of response from the viewer. The response can be any kind of response as long as it is a response. The worst possible situation is that the image obtains no response from the viewer as can often be the case with the typical technical masterpiece. If there is no response there is no communication taking place. The photograph may cause a response that is happy or sad, good or bad, positive or negative, shocking, exciting, moving or any other emotion or feeling.

When evaluating our images we must decide whether or not the image engages us and causes us to be informed or moved in some way. Does the image cause the us to think? Does the image cause the us to question? Does the image communicate with the us and inform about some event or happening? Does the image



cause an effect on our emotions – sadness, happiness, anger, or any other feeling?

**Slide 40**



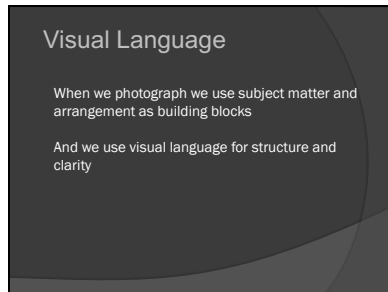
We use verbal language when we wish to communicate using speech or writing, by putting our thoughts into words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs.

The words and phrases are the building blocks we use to construct our verbal communication and grammar sets the rules for structure and clarity in the way the words and phrases are arranged.

However, the effectiveness of our verbal communication is not the words, phrases and grammar themselves but the way in which we fuse them into prose or poetry to express our ideas.



## Slide 41

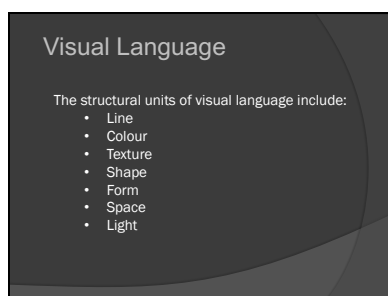


When we create a photograph we communicate our thoughts using visual language.

Just like verbal communication, visual communication requires us to use the building blocks and rules of visual language to visually communicate our thoughts.

The effectiveness of our visual communication will be controlled not by the visual building blocks and rules themselves but by the effectiveness of our use of them to create our images.

## Slide 42



A drawing, a map, a painting and a photograph are all examples of physical images that use visual language to visually communicate.

The structural units of visual language include line, colour, texture, shape, form, space and light. Each of these structural units is important.

When evaluating a photograph, we need to identify which of



these units the photographer has used to express the message or to create a mood, and how effectively they were used.

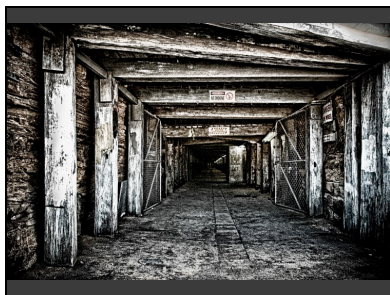
**Slide 43**



What is the subject of this image?  
What visual communication elements have been used in the construction of this image?

Movement  
Shape  
Texture  
Light  
Colour

**Slide 44**

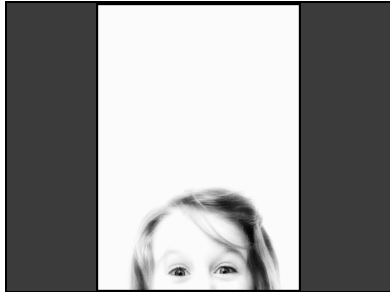


What is the subject of this image?  
What visual communication elements have been used in the construction of this image?

Texture  
Line  
Perspective  
Shape



**Slide 45**



What is the subject of this image?  
What visual communication elements have been used in the construction of this image?

Light  
Negative space

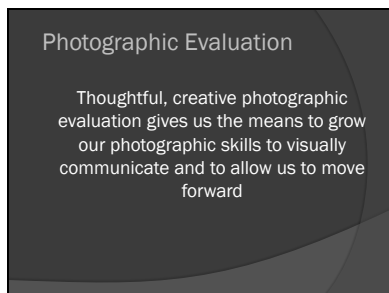
**Slide 46**



What is the subject of this image?  
What visual communication elements have been used in the construction of this image?

Light  
Colour  
Shape

**Slide 47**



Thoughtful, creative photographic evaluation gives us the means to grow our photographic skills to visually communicate and to allow us to move forward.